



NEW JERSEY CHAPTER
145 West Hanover St., Trenton, NJ 08618
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www.SierraClub.org/NJ

March 25, 2013

Mr. Matthew Boxer
State Comptroller
State of New Jersey
Office of the State Comptroller
P.O. Box 024
Trenton, NJ 08625
Via email: comptrollertips@osc.state.nj.us

RE: Outreach to Elected Officials and Community Groups around the Passaic River Cleanup

Dear Mr. Boxer,

The New Jersey Sierra Club is concerned about the outreach being done and the grant program established by the 70 companies potentially responsible for the cleanup of dioxin in the Passaic River. We believe these efforts are being undertaken to build support for a weaker, less protective and cheaper cleanup that would continue to put the local environment and public health at risk. Especially troubling is that these companies are holding meetings on their weaker plan and at those sessions announcing grants to fund local projects for municipal officials and community leaders. *The Star Ledger* has reported that grant applications were even distributed at some meetings.¹ Grant recipients and potential grant recipients have sent letters to the EPA opposing their more protective cleanup plan.

We are concerned that the responsible parties in the Passaic River and Newark Bay are interfering with the cleanup. They are circumventing the public process and more importantly trying to influence the outcome by offering grants to community groups and municipal and county officials. We are concerned they are trying to use undue influence in the cleanup process. We are troubled that there may be a quid pro quo of having these towns support a less effective cleanup plan being proposed by the responsible parties that will not address the contamination of the River and Bay and will allow dioxin to continue to spread in exchange for receiving grant monies. We do not believe the cleanup plan will work and is just a way to save money.

This is one of the most contaminated areas in the country and dioxin could move into fisheries up and down the Atlantic seaboard and into the food chain. Cleaning this up properly and holding the responsible parties accountable is critical to protecting public health and the environment.

We believe the responsible parties are trying to circumvent the CERCLA process and use

¹ Hutchins, Ryan. "70 firms devise strategy to quash EPA's plans for Passaic River cleanup". *The Star Ledger*. Mar 24 2013. http://www.nj.com/politics/index.ssf/2013/03/passaic_river_cleanup_epa_plan.html

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funding to influence the EPA cleanup process. We hope you will look into these concerns as it is a risk to the environment and public health. This dioxin must be cleaned up properly and we believe these parties are trying to prevent that from occurring.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Jeff Tittel
Chapter Director

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